



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Letter of Support, East Gallatin Restoration at Story Mill Project

Jim Darling
Habitat Section Supervisor
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
PO Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620

May 2, 2014

Dear Jim,

As the fisheries biologist overseeing the Gallatin watershed, I want to voice my support for The Trust for Public Land Future Fisheries Improvement Program grant application to fund the East Gallatin Restoration at Story Mill Project. The East Gallatin River and Bozeman Creek each suffer from water quality impairments that affect fish and the aquatic community. By restoring the wetlands filters and improving riparian function, I expect decreases in sediments and nutrients to be reflected in a healthier aquatic community. I believe there will be a positive effect on the resident trout population. Beyond the environmental benefits, I appreciate the project's focus on building community education and participation in the restoration.

This project will repair and revegetate raw, eroding stream banks and remove concrete and other foreign materials from the stream channel. Floodplain restoration will be another benefit along with improved channel function. I believe the overall project has the potential to lower water temperatures in this reach and decrease instream sediments. High water temperatures and excess sedimentation are major impairments of the East Gallatin River below the project area.

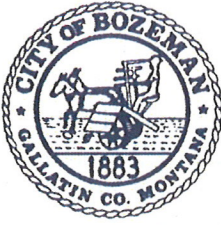
Lands along the East Gallatin River and Bozeman Creek are almost wholly privately owned in the Gallatin Valley. This project will provide a substantial reach of public stream trout fishing right in the City of Bozeman. I expect significant angling use by youth in this new city park. Environmental education through various groups will be an added benefit of the project.

I hope you agree that this is a great opportunity to build community support and awareness of stream restoration while increasing angling opportunity and directly addressing water quality and riparian habitat issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael W. Vaughn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" and last name "Vaughn" clearly distinguishable.

Michael W. Vaughn
Madison-Gallatin Fisheries Biologist
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
1400 S. 19th
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CITY OF BOZEMAN
Bozeman, Montana
Department of Public Works

May 7, 2014

Jim Darling, Habitat Bureau Chief
Future Fisheries
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, Montana 59620-0701

Mr Darling:

I am pleased to provide this letter of support for The Trust for Public Land's (TPL) Future Fisheries request for the Story Mill Park. Water quality and fish habitat enhancements are an important part of the park proposal and restoration efforts.

I believe the Story Mill restoration project will enhance our water quality and fish habitat in three ways. First, the proposed wetlands will improve the water quality in Bozeman Creek which is directly impacted by stormwater from the City. The initial proposal has a backwater lagoon designed into the project that will receive water from Bozeman Creek, especially during high flow events. This feature will remove sediment from the creek and improve overall water quality. In addition, with some future modifications, the wetland could serve to treat additional stormwater. I believe that enhanced stormwater treatment will have a direct impact on water quality and help improve the fishery.

Second, reconstructing the wetland and the associated riparian areas will improve the water quality in the East Gallatin River. The City's Montana Pollution Elimination Discharge Elimination System (MPDES) Permit is based on the water quality of the East Gallatin River. And those permit requirements are based in part on the water quality required for a viable fishery. Meeting future permit limits will require the City to encourage and invest in projects that improve water quality throughout the watershed thus mitigating the need to make further expensive investments in the City's wastewater reclamation facility. Wetlands are known to improve water quality by providing sediment and nutrient removal and moderating flow and temperature. All of these improvements are beneficial to the fishery. The Story Mill site represents one of the few, if not only, significant opportunity within the City limits to restore wetlands and take advantage of their associated benefits.

Third, the propose project will improve the flood plain thus reducing the potential for flooding during high flow events on the East Gallatin. The recontoured flood plain will also improve stream bank stability, enhance riparian habitat and provide improved fish habitat.



Greater Gallatin Watershed Council

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Jim Darling, Habitat Bureau Chief
Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
1420 East Sixth Avenue
Helena, MT 59620

April 30, 2014

RE: Story Mill Project FFIP Application

Dear Mr. Darling,

The Greater Gallatin Watershed Council (GGWC) is a collaborative watershed group dedicated to improving water quality in the lower Gallatin watershed for the benefit of the community. We have had the privilege of working closely with the Trust for Public Land in planning the Story Mill Community Wetlands Restoration Project. The Board of GGWC believes that this project presents a significant opportunity to improve water quality and stream function on the East Gallatin River and Bozeman Creek, as well as to provide the community with access to these streams and wetlands.

Both the East Gallatin River and Bozeman Creek do not meet the Montana Department of Environmental Quality's state water quality standards. The rehabilitation of the 54-acre Story Mill park site will provide significant improvements to these waterways, including: wetland restoration, revegetation of riparian areas, reconnection of stream channels with historic floodplains, and removal of rip-rap and debris along stream banks. GGWC expects that this work will improve water quality, reduce sedimentation, and restore a more natural stream function on the East Gallatin and Bozeman Creek, resulting in better pool and riffle habitats and improved conditions for all life stages of trout.

Volunteers with GGWC's Stream Team program have been and will continue monitoring water quality on Bozeman Creek and the East Gallatin River to collect data pre-, during, and post-restoration. GGWC has also been assisting with monitoring groundwater wells at the Story Mill site. Currently, GGWC is developing a Watershed Restoration Plan to identify priorities and projects for improving streams within the Gallatin watershed. The Story Mill Restoration Project will be prominently featured in the Watershed Restoration Plan because of its significant impact on water quality. In addition to our strong support of TPL's efforts at Story Mill, GGWC has and will continue to offer Board, staff, and volunteer staff time as in-kind support for this project.

In closing, GGWC fully supports TPL's proposal to the Future Fisheries Improvement Program and urges you to fund the Story Mill Community Wetlands Restoration Project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marcia Youngman".

Marcia Youngman
GGWC Board Chair

*Promoting conservation and enhancement of our water resources
while supporting the traditions of community, agriculture, and recreation*



Montana Department of
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Steve Bullock, Governor
Tracy Stone-Manning, Director

P. O. Box 200901

Helena, MT 59620-0901

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Website: www.deq.mt.gov

May 7, 2014

Jim Darling, Habitat Bureau Chief
Future Fisheries
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
PO Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701

Subject: Future Fisheries Improvement Program grant for restoration funding on the Story Mill park site

Mr. Darling,

The Montana Department of Environment Quality's mission is to protect, sustain, and improve a clean and healthful environment to benefit present and future generations. As part of this mission we are the lead state agency for implementation of the Montana Water Quality Act, and implementation of sections 303d, 305b and 319 of the federal Clean Water Act. The goal of the federal Clean Water Act is to protect, sustain, and improve is the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of our waters.

The work The Trust for Public Land is submitting for restoration funding through the Future Fisheries program, directly works to improve the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the East Gallatin River. Currently the East Gallatin River through the Story Mill park site is not meeting state water quality standards for primary contact recreation and aquatic life. In other words the water quality in the East Gallatin River is not supporting to its fullest potential fishing or the fish and their food sources. The removal of the riprap, reconnection to its floodplain, and revegetation along the East Gallatin River will help to restore the river processes and channel form. These actions will have an impact on the water quality of the East Gallatin River and help it meet state water quality standards.

Montana DEQ's Wetland Program has worked closely and partnered with The Trust for Public Land on several aspects of the Story Mill park site. The Trust for Public Land and their partners have the necessary experience and capability to successfully complete the restoration of the East Gallatin River through the Story Mill park site. I strongly encourage the Future Fisheries review committee to support this project and fund the important work The Trust for Public Land is undertaking.

Sincerely,

Stephen M. Carpenedo, PWS
Montana DEQ Wetland Program, Wetland Environmental Science Specialist
SCarpenedo2@mt.gov



United States Department of the Interior
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
INTERMOUNTAIN REGION
4030 Sourdough Road
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Jim Darling, Habitat Bureau Chief
Future Fisheries
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P.O. Box 200701
Helena, Montana 59620

April 22, 2014

Dear Mr. Darling:

The National Park Service's Rivers and Trails Program (RTCA) supports the Trust for Public Lands' application for a \$56,000 Future Fisheries Improvement Program grant to assist with their 54-acre Story Mill rehabilitation project. This site is situated at the confluence of Bozeman Creek and the East Gallatin River, and as such is key to the success of current community efforts to improve the ecological character and community value of both waterways.

For the past 3 ½ years, RTCA has coordinated a community-based process, called the Bozeman Creek Enhancement Project, to write a long-term enhancement plan for Bozeman Creek while simultaneously identifying and working on high-priority early-action projects. The Bozeman Creek Enhancement Plan was adopted by the Bozeman City Commission as policy in July, 2012, and has four primary goals:

- Restore the natural processes necessary for a functioning creek ecosystem.
- Improve water quality to support aquatic life and primary contact recreation.
- Foster broad awareness of and appreciation for Bozeman Creek, leading to a strong community stewardship ethic.
- Provide ample public access and appropriate recreational opportunities along the creek corridor, while ensuring resource protection.

TPL's Story Mill Project addresses all of these goals. The project will restore aquatic and wetland habitat, provide floodplain reconnection, improve water quality, enhance wildlife habitat, provide an outdoor classroom, and create new opportunities for fishing and other nature-based recreational activities.

Demand for close-to-home fishing opportunities in this community is high. Despite water quality challenges, people routinely catch large trout in these two streams wherever habitat is good. Yet there are currently only a few locations where the public can access the East Gallatin





Gallatin Local Water Quality District

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May 2, 2014

Jim Darling, Habitat Bureau Chief
Future Fisheries
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701

Dear Mr. Darling and Future Fisheries Committee:

I am writing in support of the Trust for Public Land (TPL) application to the Future Fisheries Improvement Program to implement stream and wetland restoration activities on the Story Mill Park site in Bozeman, Montana. Portions of the East Gallatin River and Bozeman Creek meander through or are adjacent to the Story Mill Park. In addition, the site also contains historical wetlands. The plan to rehabilitate the 54-acre park site includes restoration of fish habitat, water quality improvements, wetland restoration and reconnection of stream channels with historic floodplains. This will enhance habitat for resident and migratory birds and wildlife and create new recreation and education opportunities associated with the aquatic habitat.

Specifically, this project will provide access to fishing along the East Gallatin River which has been recognized by the community as a significant project benefit. The public will have access to the entire site including stream access to both the East Gallatin River and Bozeman Creek thanks to a land transfer between TPL and the City of Bozeman. The plan to restore eight acres of wetlands (which more than doubles the current wetland acreage) will improve surface and groundwater quality. The restoration of a backwater channel on Bozeman Creek will recreate rare rearing habitat for juvenile fish in this urbanized and channelized reach. Additionally, the restoration of floodplain areas along the East Gallatin River and Bozeman Creek will re-connect these two streams with their historic floodplains, attenuating flood flows, capturing fine sediments and improving water quality by trapping and processing nutrients and other pollutants.

The Gallatin Local Water Quality District is excited to support and assist TPL in their efforts to implement stream and wetland restoration activities on the Story Mill Park site which will improve and enhance water quality. The site represents one of the few, if not only, significant opportunities within the Bozeman city limits to restore a large complex of wetlands and take advantage of their associated benefits to water quality in the East Gallatin watershed. I encourage you to support and fully fund TPL's application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tammera Crone".

Tammera Crone
Manager



Patrick Byorth

Director, Montana Water Project

Jim Darling, Habitat Bureau Chief
Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
1420 East Sixth Avenue
Helena, MT 59620

April 25, 2014

RE: Story Mill Project FFIP Application

Dear Jim,

Trout Unlimited's (TU) Montana Water Project is a collaborative conservation organization that works closely with watershed groups and communities to protect, restore, reconnect and sustain Montana's renowned coldwater fisheries. Our work often focuses on water rights, private lands and working landscapes. The Trust for Public Land's (TPL) application to fund the Story Mill Community Wetlands Restoration Project presents an opportunity to build synergy between social and ecological opportunities within the greater Bozeman community. TU is pleased to commit our support for TPL's project that blends the values of the community with fisheries and habitat restoration. The collective expertise and experience working on the restoration project is extensive among its broad network of partners.

The Story Mill site is located just two miles from Bozeman's downtown. TPL's larger Story Mill Project is designed to maximize its potential as a new city park, connecting members of the community through local events, urban agriculture, and expanding the town's Main Street to the Mountains trail system. Along with the direct social benefits, the project's wetlands restoration and stream restoration efforts will markedly improve the stream function and fish habitats in the East Gallatin River and Bozeman Creek and improve public fishing prospects. In particular, removing in-channel debris and naturally revegetating eroding streambanks will reduce sedimentation and restore more natural stream function. In addition, restoring floodplain function in both currently channelized and entrenched streams and creating backwater habitats will improve habitat conditions for all life stages of trout. Finally, securing nearly a half mile of public fishing access provides a significant public benefit.

In addition to our strong support for TPL's broader endeavors at Story Mill we are able to offer our staff time and in-kind resources as private match of \$3,500 for this proposal. In closing, we fully support TPL's proposal to the Future Fisheries Improvement Program and urge you and the Citizen's Panel to consider funding the Story Mill Community Wetlands Restoration Project as a significant opportunity to meld community values with wetlands and stream restoration promoting Bozeman's sustainability and deeper public engagement with the local environment. We look forward to participating in this exciting project.

Sincerely,

Patrick A. Byorth

Trout Unlimited's mission: To conserve, protect, and restore North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.

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